forests and to plant new forests in the States of the North-Eastern region during the preceeding five years; and

(b) the levels of achievements in each case/instance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Autonomy to States in Forest Related Matters

1076. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Chief Ministers of many States have demanded that forest related matters should be given back to States from the Central purview; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to examine and decide this issue as early as possible so as to give more autonomy to States in the economic fields as well as forest related matters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) One of the recommendations made by Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations is, delegation of powers to the States to divert upto 5 hectares of reserved forest lands which are urgently required for specific public purposes. In a meeting of Inter-State Council held in November, 1997 this recommendation has been agreed to in principle subject to suitable terms and conditions as might be required under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in a court case regarding forestry matters in which, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 is also one of the issues under consideration.

Rising Vehicular Pollution

1077. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention was drawn to a report of the NGO "Vatavaran" published in the Pioneer, dated 20th February, 1998, that vehicular pollution which constituted only 3% of air pollution in Delhi in 1970-71 had crossed 63% in 1990-91 and has already crossed 70% by now;

(b) if so, what are the major factors contributing to such heavy vehicular pollution on Delhi roads; and

(c) what steps have been and are proposed to be taken to check this pollution and protect Delhi citizens from ghastly diseases like cancer, asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory diseases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) Yes sir.

(b) The major factors contributing to heavy vehicular pollution on Delhi roads are:

(i) Increase in population of vehicles, particularly personalized vehicles;

(ii) Most in use vehicles (pre-1990) are of old engine design and are high emitters;

(iii) High emissions of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons from 2 and 3-wheelers accounting for 2/3 of total vehicular pollution;

(iv) Overloading of transport system;

(v) Pollution from diesel trucks and DTC and privately operated buses;

(c) (i) The Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority has been set up for the

National Capital Region for protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing, controlling and abating environmental pollution;

(ii) An Action Plan for the control of Pollution in the National Capital Region has been prepared;

(iii) Monitoring of air quality by the Central Pollution Control Board through 10 ambient air quality monitoring stations under the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Program. The data generated forms the basis for the analysis of the quality of air in the different regions against the prescribed limit;

(iv) Effluent and emission standards for major sectors of air and water polluting industries have been notified. Industries have been directed to comply with the prescribed standards;

(v) Emission norms have been progressively tightened for emissions from vehicles at the manufacturing stage. These came into effect on 9.1.1990 with a tighter standard introduced on 1.4.1996. A much stricter emission norm will be introduced from 1.4.2000 for all categories of petrol and diesel vehicles;

(vi) The Government has drawn up a major program for improvement of the quality of automotive fuels. Unleaded petrol was introduced in Delhi from 1.4.1995 for the use of new 4 wheeler petrol vehicles fitted with catalytic converters introduced from this date. Low sulphur diesel of 0.25% has been introduced in Delhi from 15th August 1997. Pre-mixed fuel of mixture is being supplied in the retail fuel outlets to prevent sale of loose low quality oils.

(vii) Introduction of cleaner fuels such as CNG, propane and LPG in in-use vehicles in order to reduce emissions;

(viii) The public transport system is proposed to be strengthened by inducting 1500 buses of urban design into the DTC fleet;

(ix) More than 200 private petrol pumps and workshops have been authorised by the Department of Transport, Government of Delhi for pollution checking, tuning of polluting vehicles and issuance of Pollution Under Control Certificates. Pollution checking facilities are being increased;

(x) The Transport Department has launched public awareness campaigns in Delhi to educate people about the statutory punitive provisions related to vehicular pollution, health hazards, and on the maintenance measures for control of pollution from vehicles;

(xi) A system of synchronised signals, and better traffic management of most polluted intersections has been introduced;

Extra Bonus to Wheat Farmers

1078. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to give extra bonus to the wheat farmers for the 1998-99 rabi marketing season;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government would enhance P.D.S. wheat price accordingly; and

(d) whether this extra bonus facility will be provided to the rice farmers also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. the Government has granted a central bonus of Rs. 55/- per